






Justices					
	George C. James	John C. Few	John Kittredge	Kaye Hearn	Donald Beatty
Confidence Score	Mild Republican	Mild Republican	Mild Republican	Mild Republican	Indeterminate
Opinion Partners					
Dissenting Minority					
Determining Majority					
Lone Dissenter		✓		✓	

- ▶ Number of justices: **5**
- ▶ Number of cases: **87**
- ▶ Percentage of cases with a unanimous ruling: **85.1% (74)**
- ▶ Justice most often writing the majority opinion: **Justice James (11)**
- ▶ Per curiam decisions: **44**
- ▶ Concurring opinions: **8**
- ▶ Justice with most concurring opinions: **Justice Few (4)**
- ▶ Dissenting opinions: **14**
- ▶ Justice with most dissenting opinions: **Justice Few (4) and Justice Hearn (4)**

COURT CONTENTION

Opinion partners/dissenting minority

In 2020, four cases were decided by split decision. No two justices were opinion partners in more than one case. Each justice on the court was in the minority in at least one split case.

Determining majority

In the cases decided by split decision, there was no consistent determining majority. No justice was in the majority in every case decided by split decision.

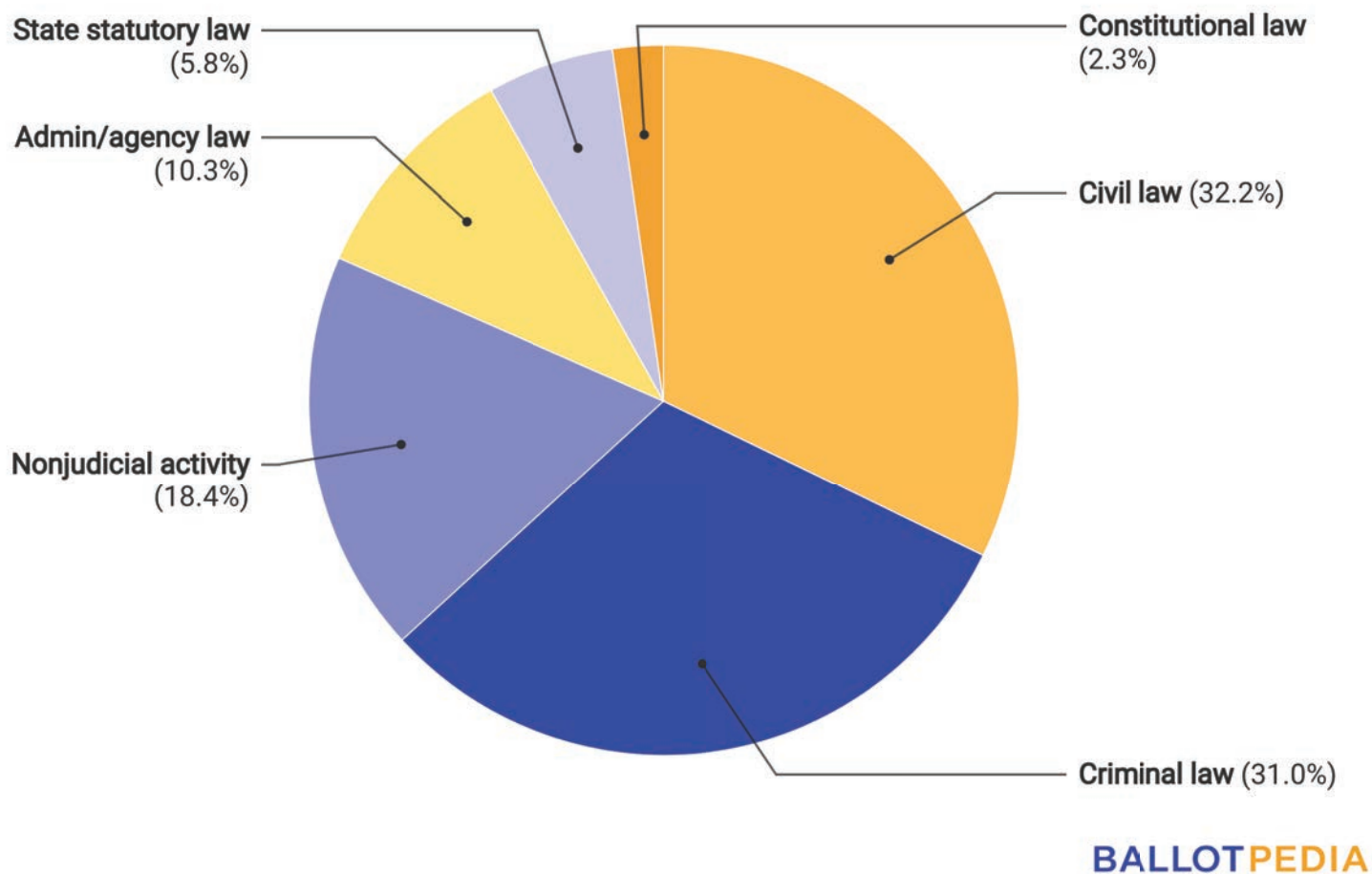
Lone dissenter

In 2020, eight cases before the South Carolina Supreme Court were decided 4-1. Justices Few and Hearn dissented alone three times each. In our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study, Justices Few and Hearn both recorded Mild Republican Confidence Scores.

COURT JURISDICTION

The court has original and appellate jurisdiction. It has exclusive appellate jurisdiction for all state cases regarding the death penalty, state utility rates, judgments involving public bonded indebtedness and elections, and orders limiting state grand juries and relating to abortions by minors. Original jurisdiction pertains to the issuance of writs including mandamus, certiorari, and extraordinary bills. Additionally, the court has the responsibility of overseeing the admission of individuals to practice law in the state. It also supervises the discipline of attorneys and suspension of those no longer able to practice due to mental or physical condition.

Case types decided by South Carolina Supreme Court, 2020



The most common case category heard by the South Carolina Supreme Court in 2020 was civil cases. Of the 87 cases it heard, 28 were civil law cases, or 32.2 percent of its total caseload for the year. A civil case is one that involves a dispute between two parties, one of whom seeks reparations or damages.

The second most common cases that reached the supreme court were criminal law cases. A criminal case involves a final criminal appeal before the court of last resort. The South Carolina Supreme Court heard 27 criminal law cases in 2020, or 31.0 percent of its total caseload for the year.

The third most common cases that reached the court were nonjudicial activity. A case is considered nonjudicial activity if it does not involve a formal hearing and discussion before the court. The South Carolina Supreme Court heard 16 nonjudicial activity cases in 2020, or 18.4 percent of its total caseload for the year.